

# The Merry Widow

By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

COPYRIGHT, 1908, BY HENRY W. SAVAGE



## CHAPTER V. To the Rescue.

**N**ISH, who had obediently followed De Joldon and Natalie at Popoff's orders until they had entered the summer house, now wriggled forward in confusion on hearing the ambassador's voice.

"Did you call me, sir?" he asked.

"I most surely did call you, Mr. Nish," cried Popoff. "And I told you I was certain I saw a lady, or, rather, a lady's skirt, disappearing into that summer house. Who was she?"

"I—I don't know, your excellency," tremblingly lied Nish.

"You ought to know!" scolded Popoff. "You were standing nearer the summer house than I was. Didn't you see her at all?"

"Yes, sir—yes, I saw her, if I may say so, but I don't know who she was. I really don't."

"Was she alone?"

"No, your excellency, not quite alone. There was, if I may say so—there was a gentleman with her. At least he looked like a gentleman, but I didn't recognize him either."

"Well, well, well!" chuckled the ambassador, seating himself in a garden chair and eyeing the summer house with delightful interest. "A little flirtation, eh? Gone in there to whisper sweet nothings where no one can interrupt 'em. I wonder who they are! Now, I really wonder! Mr. Nish, I would not for the world have you think I am the least bit curious. But—I'll just sit here awhile, for a joke, and watch them come out. In the meantime, Mr. Nish, you might slip around to the rear of the summer house and see if there is another door there. If there is, you might lock it. Understand?"

"Ye-yes, your excellency" mumbled panic stricken Nish, scuttling away

rear door of the summer house. Meantime Popoff, his curiosity mastering him, had left his seat. Stealing forward on tiptoe, he put his eye to the keyhole of the wicker door.

He had scarcely bent over this when Danilo, happening to pass by on his way to the gate, paused in amazement at sight of the Marsovian ambassador thus assuming the role of Paul Pry.

"Why, hello, old chap!" cried the prince. "What are you up to?"

"Hush!" warned Popoff in an excited whisper. "A lady went into the summer house a few minutes ago with a gentleman. I can't see them very clearly. There's too much stuff in the keyhole. But they're sitting opposite each other with only a little table between them. The lady's back is to me, but it somehow looks familiar. The man is talking as earnestly as if he were trying to borrow money. Now he's bending across and kissing her hand, and she doesn't seem to mind. It's—why, bless my soul, it's that fellow De Joldon! Well, well! Of all things! Now, if only the lady would turn her face so I could see her!"

"Come away, sir!" begged Danilo, the whole situation bursting upon his mind. He caught Popoff's sleeve, but the ambassador shook him off.

"Let me alone!" he whispered. "Can't you see what it all means? It means we've found the lady De Joldon's in love with, the very woman we've both been looking for! And now if she'll just turn her head a little I'll be able to see her face, and then—"

"Then you don't know who she is?" queried Danilo.

"No. But I'll!"

"Then take my advice and don't try to find out. Let well enough alone. Come away, old chap, and—"

"No, no! There; you pulled my head away just as she was turning around. I'd have seen her in another second. They're getting up. Maybe they'll go out by the other door, and then I shan't be able to know who!"

"Let me do the looking," suggested Danilo. "If either of us has to play the eavesdropper I'll!"

"No. It is my place," asserted Popoff. "But I'll bet you a hundred francs it's Mme. Nova Kovitch."

"It would be like stealing a drunken

he kissed her hand!"

"Oh, I dare say she was more kissed against than kissing!" Danilo observed consolingly. "But be careful, sir. A whole lot of people are within ear-shot."

"Then let them know the worst!" cried Popoff in a voice that brought a number of guests hurrying to the spot. "I'll denounce her before them all! Come out of there," he bellowed, rushing forward. "Both of you! Come out!"

He threw the summer house door wide open and shrank back, incredulous, aghast.

On the threshold stood De Joldon and—Sonia!

"What—what does this mean," gurgled the confused ambassador, "this—this change and?"

"You called to us to come out," returned Sonia calmly. "May I ask what you wanted of us?"

"Sonia!" gasped Danilo. And through the confusion of many excited voices she heard him and thrilled to the note of anguish in his half stifled cry.

"If—if it was you who were in there with M. de Joldon," stammered Popoff, "where is my wife?"

"Here I am, dear," answered Natalie, stepping out of the crowd, with which she had mingled after her hurried exit through the rear door of the summer house. "Here I am! What is the matter?"

"Matter enough!" cried her husband. "I could have sworn I saw you sitting in that arbor with M. de Joldon."

"My dear!"

Natalie's exclamation was a triumph of shocked propriety.

"He was kissing your hand, I thought," went on the dazed ambassador.

This time Natalie moved away from him in offended dignity. But Popoff hastened to throw his arm about her and draw her back.

"I was wrong," he assured her—"a blunder of eyesight! I apologize! I'm sorry. I'm—"

"I begin to understand," put in Sonia, stepping forward in fear lest Natalie overdo her pose of virtuous indignation. "It seems that the Marsovian ambassador has done me the honor to listen at a keyhole in hopes of overhearing my conversation. Sooner than disappoint him, M. de Joldon, will you please repeat to him just what you said to me in there?"

De Joldon understood. If Natalie was to be saved, if Sonia was not to be talked about, heroic measures were necessary.

"I asked Mme. Sonia Sadova," said he, "to do me the honor to become my wife!"

Danilo stood motionless, his lips set in a white line, amid the buzz of congratulations and laughter that followed De Joldon's announcement. Sonia noted his agony and said joyfully to herself:

"My prince, I think I've won! You'll have to speak, soon or late, now, and when you do—"

"And Marsovia loses the twenty millions!" Popoff muttered, recovering his self possession and somewhat belatedly remembering his country's needs.

"Prince," called Sonia mischievously, "I haven't heard your congratulations yet. You don't look as happy as you might at the news."

"Happy!" echoed Danilo, with a scornful, mirthless laugh. "Why shouldn't I be? Accept my congratulations, my paternal blessing and anything else you choose to levy on me for. My own motto is, 'Love when you may, propose seldom and marry—not at all!'"

"Let me tell you a little fairy story: There were once a prince and a princess. They loved each other. But the prince was poor and dared not tell of his love for fear of being thought a fortune hunter. His silence made the princess angry. So she went and promised her hand to another man, and they all lived miserably unhappy ever after. And the moral of that stupid little story is that I'm sick of respectability, and I'm awake from my crazy dream of love, and I'm going back to Maxim's, and you can all go to—Marsovia!"

"He loves me! He loves me!" panted Sonia under her breath.



### "I'M AWAKE FROM MY CRAZY DREAM OF LOVE, AND I'M GOING BACK TO MAXIM'S."

among the bushes. The little clerk never paused until he had found Sonia. To her he poured forth the whole story, gazing with wild horror as she broke into a peal of uncontrollable laughter.

Suddenly she grew sober.

"Her husband will never forgive her," she murmured, half to herself. "He will never understand that it's just a silly, harmless, sentimental talk they're having."

Memories of the ways of jealous Marsovian husbands dashed into her mind. In that primitive fatherland wives had been beaten—yes, and murdered—for less. Something must be done, and done quickly.

"Don't worry!" she consoled the terrified Nish. "Say nothing to any one else. I'll get Mme. Popoff out of the scrape if I can."

Before Nish could reply she had disappeared down a path leading to the



(To be continued.)

Granulated Sore Eyes Cured.

"For twenty years I suffered from a bad case of granulated sore eyes," says Martin Boyd of Henrietta, Ky. "In February, 1903, a gentleman asked me to try Chamberlain's Salve. I bought one box and used about two-thirds of it and my eyes have not given me any trouble since." This salve is for sale by Frank Hart—leading druggists.

Chronic Diarrhoea Relieved.

Mr. Edward E. Henry, with the United States Express Co., Chicago, writes:

WINE AND LIQUORS.

Eagle Concert Hall  
(320 Astor Street)

Rooms for rent by the day, week, or month. Best rates in town.  
P. A. PETERSON, Prop.

# GREAT OXFORD SALE



## Good Bye to Low Shoes



While summer days are still ahead of us in which Oxfords can be worn, we have decided to close out our entire stock of Oxfords for men, women and children at once. We are not going to wait until you do not want Oxfords, but sell them right now when everybody wants them. We therefore offer Oxford shoes at the following reduced prices:

- Men's \$3.50 to \$6.00 patent colt, calf, veici and tan Oxfords, now ..... \$2.60
- Ladies' \$3.50 to \$5.00 patent calf, vici, tan Oxfords and Garden Ties, now..... \$2.50
- Boys' Misses, Youth's and Children's Oxfords ..... AT COST



The best Oxfords we have and they are the best that's made.

Come and get a pair for yourself or any member of the family. We can fit you. You will find other bargains besides those mentioned here.

# Wherity & Ralston

Astoria's Best Shoe Store.

"Our General Superintendent, Mr. I have used it since that time and 23rd Ohio Regiment, and have no ailment except chronic diarrhoea, which this remedy stops at once." For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

# WE ARE RUNNING NO CLEARANCE SALE

But we have bargains at all times, and give the best values to be had for the money. Selz and Gotzian Shoes; Conquerer and Stetson Hats; I. & S. Bing and Fechemier & Fishel Co. Clothing; stand for style and quality; no one can dress well without them.

A full stock of Men's Furnishings kept on hand. Suit Cases, Trunks, Blankets and Quilts. Full line of Loggers' Shoes. Fall Stock arriving daily.

# Luukinen & Harrison

THE STORE THAT MAKES GOOD